

IONIA SENTINEL-STANDARD

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Saranac Promise receives \$50,000 donation

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Don Page, who now lives in Texas, graduated from Saranac in 1959. Saturday night he donated \$50,000 and is now recognized at the Legacy Level for the promise, which means the donor has given \$100,000 or more. Last year Page also donated \$50,000.

"I guess partly what motivated me was when I found out that only 11% of kids in Ionia County are getting a college education and in today's world, even though I was successful without a college education it was a much different time than it is today," Page said. "The ironic part of it is, is everybody that reported to me had a college degree and I didn't and I managed 15 states all on the West Coast."

The only education Page received was from Saranac and he knows how important an education is in today's world because those who hold a degree can make around a million dollars more than a non-college graduate.

"I think in today's world an investment in young people, whether it be money or time, time is important too, it's a good investment that pays dividends for a long time," Page said.

Page said that when he first heard about the promise he read everything he could find online about it and made a trip up to meet with the committee to find out how the promise was organized and where the process was at. He was pleased with what he saw and that they were further ahead than he thought they would be.

"I got interested in this and I've always had great memories of my heritage and where I came from and all of that, so I was excited to be able to give what I gave," Page said. "For me, I never want to forget where my roots are, so I'm always interested in coming back. I love the community and I love the people."



PHOTO/ COURTESY PHOTO

Don and Sherry Page donated \$50,000 to the Saranac Promise. (From left) Bruce Chadwick, Don Page, Sherry Page, and Virgil Biggs.

The Saranac Promise assists students with post-secondary endeavors such as community college, a four-year institution or a vocational program. This year was the first time students received the promise. At graduation 40 seniors were given the scholarship which totaled \$27,000.

Fundraising efforts have resulted in nearly \$250,000 in pledges and donations and an endowment fund boosted the total to over \$900,000. Right now the organization is in the middle of its "Bridge to Success" which is a campaign to raise \$2 million over three years.

Now there has been another challenge thrown in, this time from Page. Right now there are 54 sponsors and 295 students enrolled at Saranac High School. He wants there to be one sponsor per student by next June when the alumni dinner rolls around.

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